

1-1-1920

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Recommended Citation

Morbeck, G. C. (1920) "A Summer on the Arapho," *Ames Forester*: Vol. 6 , Article 16.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/amesforester/vol6/iss1/16>

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A SUMMER ON THE ARAPAHO

By Prof. G. C. Morbeck.

The forestry at Ames includes in its curriculum a summer quarter of 12 weeks held away from the college, usually in the forest region of the north, or in the west. During this period such subjects are taught as cannot be satisfactorily handled in the class room, or laboratories on the campus. Experience along practical forestry lines is attained in its fullest extent in the great out-of-door laboratories of the mountains, streams, lakes and forests, and in the mills and factories which transform the great masses of inert wood into useful articles of commerce.

Each year about the time the ground-hog is supposed to look for his shadow, the forestry department and the students begin thinking of summer camp. Some time later when the robins and blackbirds by their presence on the campus herald the approach of spring, the task of choosing a location for the summer session is actively begun. Correspondence is initiated with National Forest officers, managers of lumber companies, and others, in regions suspected of having desirable camp sites as well as the other necessary facilities for satisfactory field work. From the mass of evidence received, the possible camp locations are selected. One by one, for one reason or another, places are eliminated until finally but one or two remain in the running. It is often difficult to select the exact site from a dis-



Preparing dinner on the banks of Grand River, near Hot Sulphur Springs, Colo.



Summer camp of the Ames Forestry Students near the Byers Ranger Station.

tance, so it is sometimes necessary to dispatch a scout to look the ground over carefully before final decision is made.

The first summer camp of the Ames foresters was conducted on Star Island in Cass Lake, on the Minnesota National Forest. Subsequent camps have not all been permanent, but rather have consisted of more or less protracted stops at points where various phases of forestry could be studied to advantage. An arrangement of this kind enabled the foresters in 1916 to study practical forestry operations on government and private lands in practically all the Western states and in Minnesota. Other camps have included a shorter itinerary with longer stops. The war made desirable a change in the conduct of camp during 1918. Able-bodied men could not conscientiously be withdrawn from productive employment, so the summer camp students were placed in the woods and at the mill of the Crossett-Western Lumber Company at Wauna, Oregon, and patriotically did what they could to "can the Kaiser" by assisting in getting out ship timbers and aeroplane stock.

The summer camp of 1919 was located in the heart of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Professor MacDonald preceded the party to select the site. After conferring with Forest officers at Denver, and upon looking over the country with particular reference to the requirements in the work to be given, a location on the Arapaho National Forest was chosen. The Arapaho lies

on the western slope of the Rockies in north-central Colorado, and entirely within the drainage area of the Grand River and its tributaries. The forest comprises about 700,000 acres of land, mostly rough, rocky and inaccessible, yet with many areas of fine, unbroken timber at the lower elevations. The headquarters of the forest is at Hot Sulphur Springs, a small town which is also the county seat of Grand County.

The "Moffat" road crossing the divide at Corona, follows a winding course from the summit to the valley below and thence continues in a more orderly fashion through the Forest westward to its terminus at Craig. The Midland trail, the main highway from Denver, reaches the crest of the mountains and enters the Arapaho at Berthoud pass and follows the tortuous Fraser river on its way westward to Salt Lake.

The exact site of the camp was at the confluence of Spruce Creek and West Saint Louis, about a quarter of a mile above the Byers Ranger Station, and about five miles southwest of the small town of Fraser, located on the railroad and also on the main highway.

A winter logging road, which had been improved somewhat but was still in poor condition, led from town to camp. Supplies were quite easily transported over this road during dry weather, and at no time was it entirely unserviceable.

For the study of forestry and related subjects the location of the camp was ideal, and probably a better site cannot be



Look Out Timber! Arapaho National Forest.



The end of a "live" chute on a timber sale area near Mt. Byer.



Ames Foresters studying timber-line types on Mt. Byer.

found in all Colorado. The camp itself was pitched at one edge of a small opening in a willow thicket, nestled among the intermediate heights of the great Rockies, at an elevation of 8,900 feet. On all sides are heavily timbered slopes of lodgepole and spruce, while to the south looms the great snowy peak of Mount Byers about five miles distant.

All of the requisites of a good camp site were present at the Byers Ranger Station. Pure cold water from the forest-clad slopes and the great snowbanks of the higher ridges, flowed along one side of camp to swell the waters of the main Saint Louis a half mile below. Wood was plentiful and ready cut, waiting to be used; fresh, bracing air filled the lungs, and beautiful scenery delighted the eye at every turn.

The camp consisted of a row of 7x9 wall tents, each accommodating two persons, fronting the small patch of open ground. At one side of the camp were the cook, dining and supply tents and at the other across a small stream were the tents of the instructing force. Lumber obtained from a mill at Fraser was used in making floors and sides for the tents, beds, tables and other camp furniture and equipment. Flies were provided for most of the tents, and canvas bed sheets under and over the blankets on each bed aided much toward comfort in sleeping.

The open plot in front of camp was used to good advantage. Space was reserved for the nightly bonfire, and nearby were

“horseshoe” ranges that were always in use when two or more fellows had nothing particular to do. On sunny afternoons the “patch” was often ablaze with color, with comforters and blankets airing or drying after spells of damp weather, especially during the latter days of camp.

The regular camp work consisted of practical exercises in camp technique, forest mensuration, field silviculture and lumbering. The work in camp technique was along lines which would enable one to fully take care of himself in the woods. Students at the beginning were required to do their own cooking, and during the entire summer were required to assist in the work of preparing meals. During the second six weeks one of the boys devoted most of his time to this work. The importance of knowing something of camp cookery is obvious. In regular forestry work it is often necessary for men to prepare their meals for days at a time.

The kitchen and dining equipment and facilities, of course, were not such as one would expect to find in a modern house, but the essentials were there—pots, pans, enameled tableware, stoves, tables, benches and such other necessities as are to be found in a regular camp. Running water from the snowy mountain peaks, and dry wood, the waste in tie making, were close at hand. Embryo cooks supplied these requisites, washed dishes and performed other necessary camp labor, thus becoming familiar with the culinary end of camp life.



Lined up for the final assault on Mt. Byer. Ames foresters above timber line.

Other phases of camp craft were also considered. Forest officers demonstrated the saddling and handling of riding animals, and the packing of horses for the trail. The "throwing" of the common hitches was also carefully demonstrated and explained. Camp fire talks on camp food and camp cookery and other topics were very interesting and instructive. The aim in camp technique is to teach the student the proper attitude toward camp life, and to attain a certain woods bearing, which only comes through experience. The ability of one to adapt himself to any camp conditions encountered determines pretty largely his measure of success in field forestry work.



The main body of the Arapaho Glacier. Prof. McDonald in the foreground.



The face of one of the many glaciers on the slopes of the Arapaho peaks.

Conditions in the vicinity of the camp were almost ideal for work in forest mensuration. Thousands of acres of virgin timber lay all about us. Resurveys of the country enabled the students to contour and otherwise map the region very accurately. Solid blocks of timber were convenient for estimating. Logging operations close at hand provided an ideal outdoor laboratory for the study of volume and instruction in scaling logs, considerable of which was done in the course of the summer. By following the fellers closely and scaling all the timber in a tree before any logs were removed, accurate volume tables were constructed.

Sample plots in typical stands were laid out and worked over in various exercises, to illustrate methods of estimating, extensively and intensively. Trees were elled and measured to

verify results and were afterward used in stem analysis, volume and form factor work.

The exercises in lumbering and forest products were conducted at operations near camp, and the students had excellent opportunities to study the various phases of the industry from the felling of the tree in the forest to the loading of the finished product on cars ready for shipment. Logging operations were covered in detail. Each operation was gone into thoroughly—felling, skidding, loading, hauling, fluming, and the minor operations necessary in logging. Tie and prop making were also studied.



Felling lodgepole pine, Arapaho National Forest.

Milling in central Colorado is conducted at small stationary or semi-stationary plants usually located in or very close to the forest. The mill at Fraser is typical of the class and was studied carefully by the students, both as to construction and operation. The logs were delivered to this plant by means of a flume about five miles long, and practically the whole supply came from National Forest lands.

Field silviculture consisted very largely in a study of the composition of the various stands and types of timber in the region, and the relationship existing among the various tree species. Reproduction studies were carried on in various parts of the forest, especially on cleared, burned and logged off areas. Practical silviculture operations in brush piling on timber sale area and the marking of trees for cutting afforded the students

fine opportunities to acquaint themselves with forestry as it is conducted by the Forest Service.

Intensive silvicultural studies were made on the Medicine Bow National Forest at Fox Park, Wyoming. A number of students made the trip from camp by automobile. The distance was around 100 miles. The students were engaged in making detailed studies of sample plots which had been laid out by the Forest Service some years previous. The plots were maintained chiefly to determine the rate of growth under various methods of treatment, and to observe the effects of the common methods of cutting on reproduction. Opportunity was given to study the seed extraction plant located at the ranger station near by.



Students at work on timber reconnaissance on forest area near camp.

In addition to the prescribed work, many interesting trips were made with Dr. Pammel of the Botany Department, on which the flora of the region was studied. Dr. Pammel is greatly interested in forestry and the forestry students and each year spends a week or ten days in camp, during which time he is constantly engaged in botanical research and instructional work. The tramps over the hills with him are always instructive and intensely interesting.

Forest Service officers were all eager to make the camp as pleasant and profitable as possible to both students and instructors. Talks on forest administration, as conducted in both office and field, gave the students a good insight into the way



Applied Silviculture. Fox Park, Wyoming. Students making seedling counts.

National Forests are handled. In many other ways the forest supervisor and his assistants contributed to the success of the camp and the general welfare of its members.

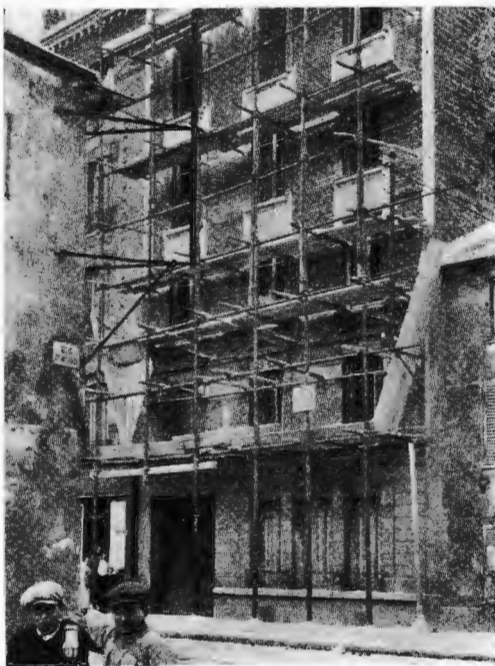
A very important part of camp life and one which was thoroughly enjoyed by the students and faculty, were the trips taken to various interesting points and places in the vicinity. Mountain trout were supposed to have been abundant but they departed to parts unknown upon our arrival. Reports of generous catches in streams some distance away lured the boys thither with indifferent results.

Game was plentiful—grouse, deer, elk and bear, and all were observed by various members of the party, which added interest to the rambles over the hills. Jaunts to high, rocky peaks, Mount Byers and Bottle mountain, and the Saint Louis Lake country were full of interest and disclosed ever shifting scenery as far as the eye could reach. Great rugged peaks, broad green valleys and intervening forest clad slopes, offer a picturesque landscape that delights the eye.

At some distance from camp were the Arapaho peaks and under the protection of their rugged crags lie the great glaciers of the same name. Surrounded on all sides by steep cut-over slopes lies Monarch Lake. Farther to the north is Grand Lake, the largest natural body of water in Colorado, and one, too, of great beauty. Specimen mountain with its woods and brightly

colored rocks, and flocks of mountain sheep, lies yet farther north and marks the physical limit of our rambles during the summer.

The forester's camp closed the last week in August and the students returned by various routes to their respective homes after twelve weeks of profitable as well as pleasant experiences, on a great National Forest in the heart of a great mountain range, to await the time when college again opened for the new year. The summer camp of 1919 was thus ended, but the flavor lasts and the memories linger.



In France. A sample of construction work.